

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE HONORABLE ERNEST A. ALMONTE
AUDITOR GENERAL OF THE STATE OF
RHODE ISLAND TO BE RECIPIENT OF THE
44th ANNUAL VERRAZZANO DAY AWARD

The Verrazzano Day Observance Committee, Inc. announces that the recipient of its 2005 Man of the Year Award will be the Honorable Ernest A. Almonte, Auditor General of the State of Rhode Island.

The award presentation will be made at the organization's annual dinner, which will be held this year at Lombardi's 1025 Banquet Restaurant on Saturday, May 14, 2005.

The award was established in 1961 by the Grand Lodge of Rhode Island, Order Sons of Italy in America and the Department of Rhode Island, Italian-American War Veterans of the United States. The Verrazzano Day Observance Committee, Inc. was incorporated by these Italian-American organizations to honor the memory of Giovanni da Verrazzano, the Florentine navigator who discovered Narragansett Bay in 1524 and who described in his report to King Francis I that the island which he discovered was like the "Isle of Rhodes." From his report, history credits Verrazzano for having been indirectly responsible for naming the State of Rhode Island. The annual event honoring this great navigator also is held to honor an outstanding leader of the Rhode Island community.

Mr. Almonte was appointed the Auditor General of the State of Rhode Island in 1994. As Auditor General, he is responsible for auditing of the \$6 billion State Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, the \$2 billion Federal Single Audit, Municipal Oversight, Performance Audits, Fraud Audits and oversight of quasi-public agencies.

He manages a staff of 44 and has over 26 years of experience in the accounting profession.

In addition to being a Certified Public Accountant, he is also a Certified Fraud Examiner and a Certified Government Financial Manager. He has been active in the AICPA and other professional associations, as well as charities. He presently serves as a Trustee of St. Joseph Health Services of Rhode Island. Mr. Almonte was appointed by the Secretary of Defense as the State of Rhode Island Chairman of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and by the Comptroller General of the United States to the Government Auditing Standards Committee. He served as the Chairman of the Members in Government Committee of the AICPA, the New England Intergovernmental Audit Forum and the Electronic Government Committee of the National State Auditors Association. Mr. Almonte is currently a member of the AICPA Board of Directors, the Chairman of the AICPA Audit Committee, the Executive Committee of the National State Auditors Association and the Rhode Island Society of CPAs.

The Committee is also excited to announce that the Principal Speaker at the banquet will be the Honorable David M. Walker, the United States Comptroller General. Mr. Walker is the nation's chief accountability officer and head of the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), a legislative branch agency founded in 1921 to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the Federal Government for the benefit of the American people.

The Honorable Valentino D. Lombardi, Associate Judge of the North Providence Municipal Court, will serve as chairman of this year's dinner. Joseph Sauro of the Department of Rhode Island, Italian-American War Veterans of the United States has been designated co-chairman. For information regarding tickets, please contact Mr. Lombardi at 725-8900.